

**ACCENTUAL-SYLLABIC HEXAMETER IN ESTONIAN POETRY
AT THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY – THE BEGINNING
OF THE 20TH CENTURY**

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Abstract. The aim of the present paper is to analyse the structure of the Estonian accentual-syllabic hexameter of the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The material includes Jaan Bergmann's translation of the first song of "The Odyssey", Friedrich Kuhlbars' stichic hexameters and elegiac distichs, Villem Ridala's elegiac distichs and some other attempts of dactylic hexameters in the earlier Estonian poetry. The analysis aims to provide a thorough description of the prosodical, metrical and rhythmical structure of hexameter. It reveals that the prosody of hexameter is not necessarily in correspondence with the prosody of natural language. Yet the prosodical shifts in the given material are rather superficial, allowing for the variation of the number of syllables. The Estonian accentual-syllabic hexameter is prevalingly dactylic and thus the rhythmic is considerably different from that of ancient hexameter, yielding to the natural rhythmic impulse of the Estonian language. Such tendency characterizes the location of word-ends, as well the secondary rhythmic of hexameter, i.e. the proportion of contracted feet.

Keywords: dactylic hexameter, pentameter, elegiac distich, accentual-syllabic versification, prosodical structure, deep structure, surface structure, secondary rhythm, contraction, caesura

1. Introduction

In most European poetical traditions, dactylic hexameter is almost always the first ancient metre to become employed systematically. The same happened in Estonian poetry: here too the verse technique of hexameter was the first to gain special attention. The developers of the Estonian hexameter proceeded mostly from the German and Russian tradition. Although the German theorists had discussed the possibilities of the quantitative hexameter in modern languages already since the beginning of the 19th century (for details, see, e.g. Lotman 1976, 1987), the Estonian hexametrist still proceeded from the principle offered by

Johann Christoph Gottsched in the 18th century. According to this principle, the strong positions were to be filled with stressed syllables and weak positions with unstressed ones: such rules resulted in the accentual-syllabic hexameter.

The aim of the present paper is to give a synopsis of the Estonian accentual-syllabic hexameter from the second half of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. The material comprises the translation of the first song of “The Odyssey” by Jaan Bergmann (i.e. 444 verses), Friedrich Kuhlbars’ stichic hexameters (72 verses) and elegiac distichs (208 verses), Villem Ridala’s elegiac distichs (456 verses) and several other attempts of dactylic hexameters in the earlier Estonian poetry. The main attention will be paid to three different aspects of versification, that is, to the prosodical, metrical and rhythmical structures.

2. Jaan Bergmann’s hexameter

2.1. Prosody

Jaan Bergmann was the first Estonian author who in order to diversify Estonian poetry¹ systematically wrote stichic hexameters and thus developed the principles of accommodating hexameter into the Estonian language. Jaan Bergmann uses in his hexameter several techniques which are characteristic of the Estonian poetry in the 19th century. The most conspicuous are the following.

1) The monophthongization of diphthongs.² In the earlier Estonian poetry, regardless of verse metre, diphthongs and long vowels can turn into monophthongs whenever required by versification rules. For example, in the following iambic tetrameter by Karl Eduard Sööt (from the poem “They said...” – “Nad ütlesid...”) we encounter the word ‘kaod’ which would normally be considered a monosyllabic word containing a diphthong, but in this particular case is monophthongized and thus fills two metrical positions:

x X x X x X x X x
Nad ütlesid, sa kaod ära.

There are numerous examples of such device in Jaan Bergmann’s hexameters as well. For example, in the following verse:

X x x X x x X x x X x X x x X x
Et tema nimi saaks tutvaks ja ausaks kuulsate reas (1, 95),

¹ Bergmann expresses his pursuits explicitly in “Sakala” (# 3), where he notes that the richer the poetry of a nation, the richer and greater its spirit (Taev, Verev 1984:24–26; Põldmäe, R. 1985: 199–200). The monotony and uniformity of the Estonian verse in the 19th century is described, e.g. by Harald Peep (1969:433–434; see also Põldmäe, J. 1978:116).

² The term ‘monophthongization’ means here and henceforth the split of a diphthong into two syllables. Such employment is not quite traditional: in rhetorics the division of one syllable into two is signified with the term ‘diaeresis’. However, the term ‘diaeresis’ can not be used here, since in the present work it is employed in its other meaning – as a certain word boundary which is opposed to caesura.

the last foot is filled with the word 'reas', which is normally a monosyllabic word. In this case the diphthong 'ea' is monophthongized and becomes a disyllabic word: re-as.

The other diphthongs like this are, e.g. *ea*, *oa*, *eo*, *äo* in the following verses:

X x x X x x X x X x x X x x Xx
Ning et ta küsida võiks, kas isast ei midagi teaks (1, 135),

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x Xx
Koledas koopas ja teinud tast omale viimase roa (2, 20),

X x x X x x X x X x x X x x Xx
Kuna teid endid on hulk, et jätaksid jõledad teod (2, 241),

X x x X x x X x X x x X x x Xx
Kõiki mu kaaslasi hirm siis kohutas kahvatuks näost (12, 243).

At the same time, diphthongs can be retained as such, cf 1, 216:

X x x X(x) x X x x X x x X x x X x
Seda ei tea. Sest ükski ju ise ei tea, kust ta pärit

where the word 'tea' occurs in the verse twice. In the first case its prosody can be interpreted in two possible ways: it either fills the strong position of the second foot as a diphthong or is monophthongized and fills the strong position and the first element of the weak position in a dactylic foot. In the second case, on the other hand, we are dealing clearly with a diphthong which fills the strong element of the dactylic foot (the two weak syllables constituting the rest of the dactyl). Cf also

X x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Võttis ihutud laua ja seadis ta võõrale ette (1, 138),

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Aga nüüd kuulutan sulle, kuis jumalad mulle on teada (1, 200),

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Ning oma tugeva käega siin nurjatuid kosijaid nuhtleks (1, 254),

where the above-mentioned diphthongs retain their qualities and fill the strong positions.

2) In accommodating words into metre, one of the most frequent devices is syncopation or vowel omission at the end of a word. See, e.g.

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Ilusajuukslisel' näkil', et jumalad otsuseks teinud (1, 86),

X x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Kokku Ahaja rahva, kel lокkavajuuksised pääd on (1, 90),

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
 Käsin ka kosijaid keelda, kel ülbus on kasvamas aina (1, 91),

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
 Et nad ei tapa ta lambaid ja kõverasarylisi härgi (1, 92),

X x x X x x X x x X x X x x X x
 Et tema nimi saaks tutvaks ja ausaks kuulsate reas (1, 95),

X x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
 Et nii kaua ju võõras on ukse ees ootnud, ja võttis (1, 120),

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
 Ammugi, nagu sa võid seda elatand kanglaselt kuulda (1, 188).

Thus, in the first example we can see the vowel omitted at the end of the first two words, while the word ‘ilusajuukselisel’ is syncopated to ‘ilusajuukslisel’. In the second example the same stem is even more syncopated: the consonant ‘l’ is also omitted. The rest of the examples show various syncopes inside the words.

3) The technique of introducing an extra syllable into a word in order to create a dactylic word is not unusual either:

X x x X x x X x X x x X x x X x
 Kulllased tallad neil all ning taga ambroosia paelad (1, 97),

X x x X x X x x X x x X x x X x
 Kuldne jääb, miks täna sa lähed nii viimati koopast (9, 446),

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
 Pihku ta parema käe ja võttis ta vaskkise oa (1, 121).³

In the first two examples the disyllabic word ‘kuldne’ is transformed into trisyllabic ‘kullased’ and ‘kuldane’. In the third example the word ‘vaskne’ is similarly altered, resulting in ‘vaskine’.

2.2. Metrical principles

The syllabic quantities have no metrical meaning in Jaan Bergmann’s verse. The reason for this is simple: during the period under discussion here, the knowledge of the phonological structure of the Estonian language was rather limited and Bergmann was not aware of quantitative possibilities of the Estonian versification. As it has been said, the basis for his hexameter lies clearly in the earlier German and Russian tradition (for the evolution of accentual hexameter see Allen 1973:353–359; Lotman 1976, 1987), where meter is realized with word accents (for the typology of such verse see also Põldmäe, J. 1978:106–108).

Therefore, the main metrical rules of Jaan Bergmann’s hexameter are the following:

³ At the same time cf, e.g. 1, 261: Surmavat rohtu tooma, et vaskseid noolepäid võita.

a) strong positions are always filled with stressed syllables: usually with primary word stresses, but sometimes also with syllables with secondary stresses:

X x x X x x X x x X x X x x X x
Ennemalt oleksin küll ühe õnnelikuma poeg ma (1, 217),

X x X x X x x X x x X x x X x
Kosilaste juure siis läks kohe jumalik noormees (1, 324).

b) weak positions are realized with one or two syllables. These syllables are usually unstressed; however, mono- and disyllabic words are accentual ancipitia and can fill both strong and weak positions. See e.g.:

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Ei mitte üksinda, vaid tema järele tulivad neitsid (1, 331),

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Aga nüüd mine sa tupp ja toimetä enese töösid (1, 356).

The primary stress of a trisyllabic word never occurs in a weak position. See e.g. 1, 51–53:

X x x X x x X x X x x X x x X x
Metsaga kaetud see saar, sääl elab üks jumalik naine,

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Tohutu Atlase tütar, kes merede sügavust tunneb,

X x X x X x x X x x X x x X x
Ilmasambaid ise ka kannab, mis suured ja pikad,

where the words like ‘metsaga’, ‘jumalik’, ‘tohutu’, ‘Atlase’, etc fill the dactylic foot, with the weak position being realized with two non-accentual syllables, while the word ‘ilmasambaid’ makes up two “spondaic” feet, i.e. one non-accentual syllable fills the weak position.

2.3. Rhythm

The main factors which determine the rhythmical variety of Bergmann’s hexameter are the contractions, i.e. the replacement of dactylic feet with the “spondaic”⁴, and the variations in the location of caesura.

In contracting verse feet, Bergmann’s main source is the rhythm of the Greek hexameter: there are few contractions in the fifth foot, while in the fourth foot the occurrence of replacements is high. An important difference, in comparison with the Greek model, lies in the rhythmic of the second and third foot. In the original of “The Odyssey” the contracted feet in the third foot are far more unusual than in the first, the second or the fourth feet (cf also Gasparov 1975:365; van Raalte

⁴ Due to the prosody of the Estonian language, the structure of such replacements is generally trochaic.

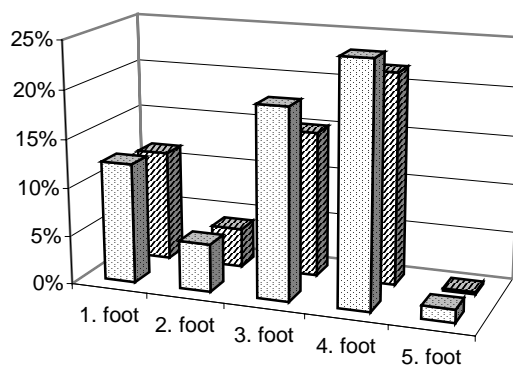
1986:40). At the same time Bergmann’s hexameter shows a rather large proportion of contractions in the third foot, while the second foot demonstrates a remarkably low incidence of “spondaic” forms (in Homer’s hexameter the second foot is the most common position for the contractions to take place).

Since due to the possible monophthongization of diphthongs the syllabic boundaries in Estonian poetry cannot always be determined unequivocally, in the present study two separate calculations have been executed: the first considers the maximum proportion of contraction, where all the diphthongs have been accounted as monophthongs, and the other counts the minimal proportion of contractions, where all the diphthongs have been considered as diphthongs. These data are showed in Table 1 and Chart 1.

Table 1. The proportion of contracted verse feet in Jaan Bergmann’s hexameter

	1 st foot	2 nd foot	3 rd foot	4 th foot	5 th foot
Maximum proportion of contractions	12.4%	5.0%	19.6%	24.8%	1.4%
Minimal proportion of contractions	11.5%	4.1%	15.1%	21.8%	0.2%

Figure 1. The proportion of contracted feet in Jaan Bergmann's hexameter



The “spondaic” feet have developed a rather steady pattern of word boundaries. The most regulated is the third verse foot, where in almost 95% of the cases word boundaries occur inside a verse foot; almost every time the foot is realized with two monosyllabic words (except the constructions with names, e.g. ‘tark O[düsseus’, ‘näkk Ka[lüpsõ’, etc). The fourth foot has certain regularities as well: in 90% of the cases verse foot has been filled with a word of two or more syllables (such words as, e.g. ‘isa’, ‘mõistlik’, ‘O]düsseus’ prevail).

The analysis of caesurae comprised the determining of the strongest syntagmatic boundaries within a verse, which divide it rhythmically into two half lines. The most typical caesura in the Greek hexameter was a masculine or feminine caesura in the third foot. In case the third foot was filled with a polysyllabic word, caesura could occur in the fourth foot after the strong position. The

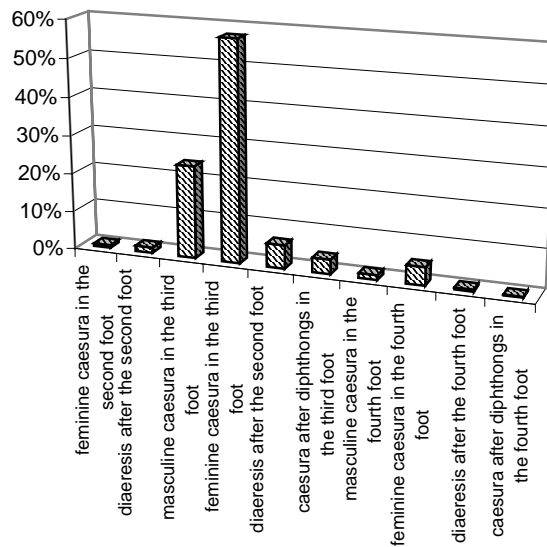
masculine caesura in the third foot (where a word boundary occurs after the strong position $-\text{:}\overline{\text{U}}\overline{\text{U}}$) is called penthemimeral (e.g. Μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά, : Πηληιάδεω Ἀχιλῆος), the feminine caesura in the third foot is called *τομή κατὰ τρίτον τροχαῖον* (split after the third trochee: $-\text{U}\text{:}\overline{\text{U}}$; e.g. Ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα, : πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλά), while the masculine caesura in the fourth foot is called hepthemimeral $-\text{:}\overline{\text{U}}\overline{\text{U}}$ (e.g. διογενὲς Λαερτιάδη, πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεύ). Verses without caesura in the third foot appear quite seldom, 14 times per 1000 lines in “The Iliad”, 9 times in “The Odyssey”, 22 times in Hesiod’s hexameters. The third foot contains more often a feminine caesura, where the word boundary occurs between short syllables $\text{U}\text{:}\overline{\text{U}}$ (cf also West 1982:36, van Raalte 1986:79–102).

Jaan Bergmann has managed to imitate the ancient example quite skilfully (cf Chart 2).

Table 2. Caesurae in Jaan Bergmann’s hexameters

feminine caesura in the second foot	0.7%
diaeresis after the second foot	1.4%
masculine caesura in the third foot	24.1%
feminine caesura in the third foot	57.4%
diaeresis after the third foot	6.1%
caesura after diphthongs in the third foot	3.8%
masculine caesura in the fourth foot	1.2%
feminine caesura in the fourth foot	4.7%
diaeresis after the fourth foot	0.5%
caesura after diphthongs in the fourth foot	0.2%
total	100.0%

Figure 2. Caesurae in Jaan Bergmann's hexameters



We can see that in Bergmann's hexameter the main caesura is also a feminine caesura in the third foot, which is followed statistically by the penthemimeral caesura in the third foot. In about 4% of the cases the caesural type in the third foot can not be specified due to the indefinability of syllabic boundaries. In the fourth foot feminine caesurae prevail, masculine caesurae occur only occasionally. There is as well a group of verses which are divided with the caesura after the third foot into two equal half verses. The analysed material contained some other caesural types too (e.g. caesurae in the second verse feet), but these are only incidental, without statistical relevance.

As for the rest of the word boundaries, then the main factor determining their location is the fact that in Estonian, word accent is fixed on the first syllable. This leads to a problem which has been critical also to later hexametrist: since the first positions in verse feet presume an accented syllable, it is hard to avoid the concurrences of word boundaries and metrical boundaries (which is characteristic of the ancient hexameter). Now and then, Bergmann manages to do so with the help of personal and place names which have an accent on the second syllable (e.g. 'Kalüpsõ', 'Kroniion', 'Orestes', 'Odüsseus', 'Poseidon', 'Aigistos', 'Mükeene', 'Olümpõs' and many others⁵), but also with the help of foreign words (e.g. 'ambroosia', 'erünnide', 'sireenide') and compounds ('kuld kannuga', 'köverasarvliisi', 'umbkeelsete', 'öökorterit', etc).

3. Friedrich Kuhlbars' hexameter

3.1. Prosody

The prosodic structure of Friedrich Kuhlbars' hexameters shows rather similar tendencies to that of Jaan Bergmann. There are numerous occurrences of monophthongizations, see, e.g. "Koidula" 1, 3:

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Kas siis me tärkava nooresoo põuest ju kustuma peab

or "An Old Column" ("Põline sammas") 4:

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Kaaslaste kaunimaks kaitseks ja tuleva aegade toeks.

There are also losses of final vowels and syllables, cf "The Land of Sensation" ("Tundmuse maa") 5:

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Jäädavalt paistab ta sureval_l sugule vägede vallast,

or "The Greatest Wish" ("Ülem soov") 21:

⁵ In some cases, however, Bergmann prefers dactylic name forms, e.g. 'Ahaja' (at the same time in 12, 184 'Ahaia'), 'Teelemah', 'Euböa'.

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
 Kogugem muistiset kulda, nii kaua kui päike meil' paistab!

The last example presents also a case of adding an extra syllable into a word: 'muistiset' (instead of 'muistset').

A syncope can be spotted in the following verse ("The Emerging Thoughts of a Creator" – "Looja ilmunud mõtted" 8):

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
 Lehvivad lopsakalt lehed ja laulavad lõbuste linnud,

where an adverb 'lõbusaste' is syncopated into 'lõbuste'.

3.2. Metrical rules

Like Jaan Bergmann's verse, Friedrich Kuhlbars' hexameters are based not on quantitative principles, but on accentual-syllabic rules. Hence, strong positions are filled mainly with syllables carrying primary stresses, but there are also several instances where these positions are filled with secondary stresses, see, e.g. "The Greatest Wish" ("Ülem soov") 15:

X x x X x x X(x) x X x X x x X x
 Rajagem ühendud jõul me vabadusele templit,

or with the second component of a compound word as in the following example ("In memory of the painter V. V. Vereschschagin" – "Kunstmaalija V. V. Vereschschagini mälestuseks") 9:

X x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
 Veteneitsid, need põimivad pärli ning teemandi pärgi.

On the other hand, it seems that Kuhlbars was not particularly competent in Greek metrics, since he violates one of the main rules of elegiac distichs: the rule according to which contractions are not admitted in the second half of the pentameter. Kuhlbars makes no objections to "spondaic" feet occurring after the caesura of pentameter and for him, the fourth foot is, in fact, one of the most preferred positions for contractions. See, e.g. "The Leading Stars" ("Juhttähed") 6:

X x X x x X X x X x x X
 Ilus isade maa, kaunis kodune koht,

where the first foot of both half verses is contracted and thus a perfect metrical symmetry is achieved (the aim of the Greek restraints was precisely to avoid such symmetry).

Among Kuhlbars' hexameters, a small group of verses with a different metrical structure can be distinguished. Thus, in several shorter poems there are no "spondaic" replacements: the whole structure is purely dactylic, with the last foot (in pentameters also the third foot) being catalectic. Accordingly, in such cases we are not dealing with the accentual-syllabic versification, but the syllabic-accentual

structure, since the number of syllables is fixed, see, e.g. “To the Schoolteacher M. Kampmann” (“Kooliõpetajale M. Kampmannile”):

Poolsada aastat on kiiresti mööda läind aegade lennul;
 edela poole ju piiluvad päikese säravad pilgud.
 Soovin, et südikalt sammudes muutlikus elus ning olus
 kaunimas köidiku kullas Teil' kumaks kord õhtune eha!

3.3. Rhythm

Table 3. The proportion of contracted verse feet in Friedrich Kuhlbars' stichic hexameters

	1 st foot	2 nd foot	3 rd foot	4 th foot	5 th foot
Maximum proportion of contractions	10.6%	4.5%	7.6%	6.1%	1.9%
Minimal proportion of contractions	9.7%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	0.0%

The percentage of the occurrences of “spondaic” feet is somewhat lower than in Bergmann’s verse, and there are some differences in the rhythmical pattern as well: while in Bergmann’s hexameters the contractions prevailed in the fourth and the third foot, then for Kuhlbars the most preferred position for contractions is in the first foot. The second foot contains, in contrast, less “spondaic” replacements, while in the third and fourth foot the incidence of “spondees” is slightly higher. In the fifth foot, in accordance with Greek standards, contractions are avoided.

Table 4. The proportion of contracted verse feet in Friedrich Kuhlbars' hexameters of elegiac distichs

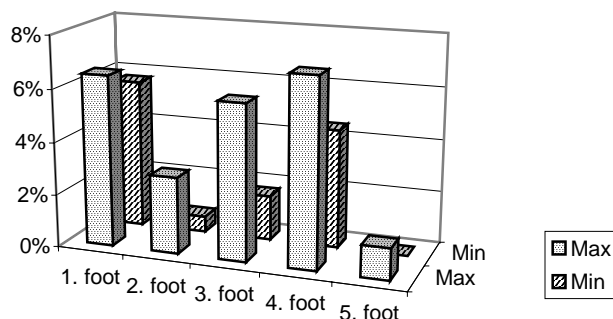
	1 st foot	2 nd foot	3 rd foot	4 th foot	5 th foot
Maximum proportion of contractions	3.8%	1.9%	4.8%	7.7%	1.9%
Minimal proportion of contractions	2.9%	0.0%	1.9%	6.7%	0.0%

The incidence of contractions in hexameters of elegiac distichs is even lower. The rhythmical structure is different from that of the stichic hexameter: contractions tend to occur most of all in the fourth foot, followed by the occurrences in the third foot; in the first foot the “spondaic” replacements appear rather seldom.

In spite of certain differences, the rhythmical structure of Kuhlbars’ hexameters has significant similarities with Bergmann’s verse. The rhythm is based on contrasts: the lowest occurrences of contractions are in the second and fifth foot, while in the first, third and fourth foot they occur more often.

Table 5. The proportion of contracted verse feet in Friedrich Kuhlbars' hexameters (total)

	1 st foot	2 nd foot	3 rd foot	4 th foot	5 th foot
Maximum proportion of contractions	6.5%	2.9%	5.9%	7.1%	1.2%
Minimal proportion of contractions	5.7%	0.6%	1.7%	4.5%	0.0%

Figure 3. The proportion of contracted feet in Friedrich Kuhlbars' hexameters**Table 6. The proportion of contracted verse feet in Friedrich Kuhlbars' pentameter**

	1 st foot	2 nd foot	4 th foot
Maximum proportion of contractions	22.1%	3.8%	11.5%
Minimal proportion of contractions	20.2%	1.0%	10.6%

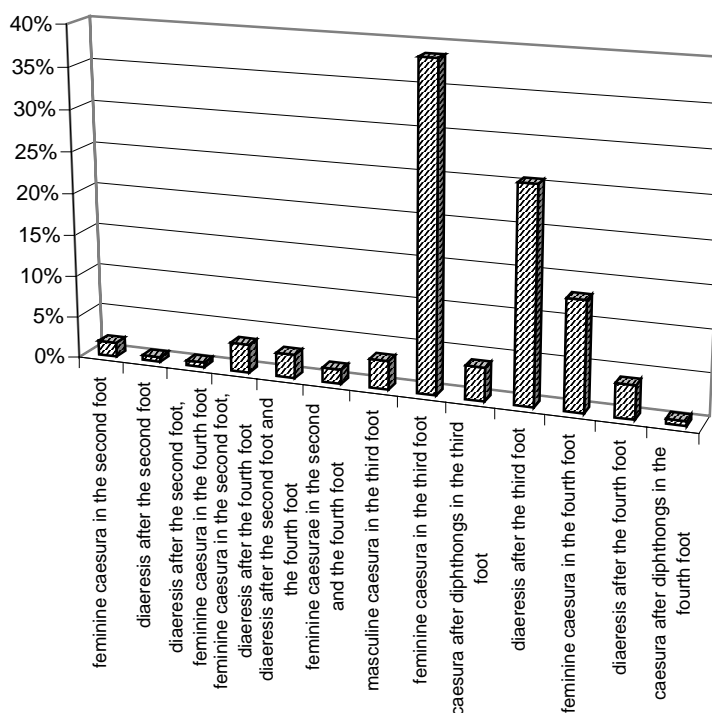
Like in Bergmann's verse, here too the the pattern of word boundaries in "spondaic" feet shows quite distinct regularities. In Kuhlbars' hexameter, the most regulated is the first verse foot, where in about 90% of the cases the foot is realized with a word of two or more syllables (especially the latter ones), e.g. 'sada', 'juhi[tähd]', 'keele[kulda]', etc.

As for the "spondaic" feet in pentameter, here the rules are quite strict: there are only a few instances of word-boundaries inside a foot, and therefore, regardless of a position, a foot is almost always realized with a word of two or more syllables, e.g. 'kaunis', 'juhib', 'ohvri[leekide]', etc.

Table 7. Caesurae in Friedrich Kuhlbars' hexameters

	stichic hexameter	hexameter of elegiac distichs	total
feminine caesura in the second foot	4.2%	0.0%	1.7%
diaeresis after the second foot	0.0%	1.0%	0.6%
diaeresis after the second foot, feminine caesura in the fourth foot	0.0%	1.0%	0.6%
feminine caesura in the second foot, diaeresis after the fourth foot	1.4%	4.8%	3.4%
diaeresis after the second foot and the fourth foot	4.2%	1.9%	2.8%
feminine caesurae in the second and the fourth foot	0.0%	2.9%	1.7%
masculine caesura in the third foot	4.2%	2.9%	3.4%
feminine caesura in the third foot	36.1%	40.4%	38.6%
caesura after diphthongs in the third foot	5.6%	2.9%	4.0%
diaeresis after the third foot	19.4%	29.8%	25.6%
feminine caesura in the fourth foot	16.7%	10.6%	13.1%
diaeresis after the fourth foot	8.3%	1.0%	4.0%
caesura after diphthongs in the fourth foot	0.0%	1.0%	0.6%
total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 4. Caesurae in Friedrich Kuhlbars' hexameters



The data given above show that the rhythm of caesurae in Kuhlbars' verse is quite different from that of Bergmann. It is obvious that unlike Bergmann, Kuhlbars was not familiar with Greek rhythmical rules: although feminine caesurae prevail, the second most common caesura is the diaeresis after the third foot which was avoided in the Greek and Latin classical hexameter. It is more frequent in elegiac distichs, apparently due to the influence of pentameter which is also divided by diaeresis into two equal half verses. see, e. g., "The Travellers" ("Rändajad") 1, 5f:

Viljad on väljadel viletsad, / umbrohul ilusad õied,
vaimude vallas, mu vend, / ütle, kuis leidsid nad sealt?

or "The Travellers" 3, 12f

Rändaja, jõua kord sihile, / kanna siis hoolsaste kotta,
mida sa korjanud teel / tuleva aegade heaks.

In comparison with Bergmann's verse, there is a higher incidence of feminine caesurae in the fourth foot, see, e.g. "Kunstnik August Veizenbergi kujude vaatel" 6:

Parema päevade vaibunud elust / ning ilust ning olust.

4. Villem Ridala's hexameter

4.1. Prosody

Another important author of the accentual-syllabic catalectic dactylic hexameter during the period under discussion is Villem Ridala, a younger contemporary of the authors discussed above. Hexameters in Ridala's original poetry are not in the stichic composition, but combined with pentameters into elegiac distichs.

The prosodic structure of Villem Ridala's hexameters presents a somewhat different picture from Jaan Bergmann's and Friedrich Kuhlbars' verse. Since in Ridala's case we are dealing with a later author, some phenomena which were characteristic of the earlier authors are not so widely encountered here. E.g. the monophthongization of diphthongs is rather occasional in Ridala's verse: monophthongs are not found in the sixth, "spondaic" foot; there are a few cases where it is impossible to determine whether we are dealing with the monophthongization or a contracted verse foot, e.g. the following verses ("Mustjala" 53 and "Karurahu" 25):

X(x) x X x x X x x X x x X x
Kaev kesk rohekad haljust, kesk lembrite lopsakad varju

X x x X x x X x x X x x X(x) x X x
 Vallandes riietest liikmed, mis higised sõust ja kuumast.

At the same time, syncopes are quite common in Ridala's verse, e.g. "Karurahu" 5:

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
 Vaevalt ta rohtunud randu, mis tõusuveed sügisel peitvad.

Sometimes extra syllables are added in order to accommodate a word to the dactylic rhythm, e.g. "Paagis lüüakse kella" ("A Bell Is Tolled in a Lighthouse") 12:

X x x X x x X X x x X x x X
 Valjusti helgib ta säääl, vaskine huugaja häääl.

or "Õhtu Reigis" ("An Evening in Reigi") 13:

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Maisemaast, varjude vallatust, laotusid öösised vilud.

One of the idiosyncrasies of Villem Ridala's style is the abundance of derivative words⁶. This is also characteristic of his elegiac distichs, cf an

⁶ In certain cases he has gone to such extremes as to attract a storm of criticism. For instance, his poem "Merineitsit" ("Mermaids") was criticized for the redundancy of derivatives causing obscurity and illegibility of text, e.g. the following passage: "Tuli Haugas tõstamahe / sulgahattu säädämähe / piidalda perämiselda / perälda vene punase. / "Tõuse, Ingeri ihana, / tõuse, neitsit, nuuksumasta, / kabo kaunis, koolemasta / põrmandolt vene punase, / meripurjava põhjalda". For the discussions about Ridala's lexical eccentricities see also Tammsaare 1976:326–335, Suits 1999:390–394.

impressive verse from his poem “Young Spring” (“Noor kevade” 11), which takes some effort to understand even for a native Estonian:

X x x X x X x x X x x X x x X x
Kundudest kustki kuulukse kumemat koovide hüüdu.

4.2. Metrical rules

In Ridala’s hexameters, metrical rules are stricter than in Bergmann’s and Kuhlbars’ verses: strong positions are filled with syllables carrying primary stresses; secondary stresses are avoided in these positions, except for the second component of compound word, see e.g. “Karurahu” 81:

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x Xx
Suletud väikene ring keset kõikust on inimeselu,

or polysyllabic foreign words, see, e.g. “Karurahu” 33:

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Fosforestseeriva laine, vee haljaste kelmete läbi.

In pentameter different rules are applied. The main difference concerns the third foot, i.e. the catalectic clausula of the first half-verse: in this position also secondary stresses can be found, see, e.g. “Paagis lüüakse kella” (“A Bell Is Tolded in a Lighthouse”) 18:

X x X x X X x x X x x X
Nii et kohmetand, sest kajab väina suu, rand.

There is also a pentameter with a possible contraction in the second half verse (which was not accepted in ancient pentameter; “Eino Leino pärjakiri” – “An Inscription on Eino Leino’s Funeral Crown” 6):

X x x X x x X X x X x x X
Uinudes aegade und, pää all kodumaa rahn.

The fourth foot, however, can also be interpreted as a dactyl, where the word ‘pää’ is monophthongized into two syllables.

4.3. Rhyme

Ridala takes over the technique which can be found already in Callimachus and Ovid: rhyme between the half verses of pentameter (see also Raven 1965: 108). Yet in ancient pentameter rhyme was not regular, but solely euphonic. At the same time, in Ridala’s case there are some poems where we come across fixed rhyme (e.g. “Young Spring”, “Night in Midwinter”, “Epitaphium”: the half verses of pentameters are recurrently rhymed with a monosyllabic masculine rhyme. See e.g. “Night in Midwinter” 1–4:

Hõbedalt särab kuu üleval, aeglaselt sõuavad pilved,
 tasa huljutab tuul oksi nii kõledid puul.
 Sügavas taevas põlevad arvuta leekivad tähed,
 kaugusest, siit ja säält, ei kõla ainustki häält.

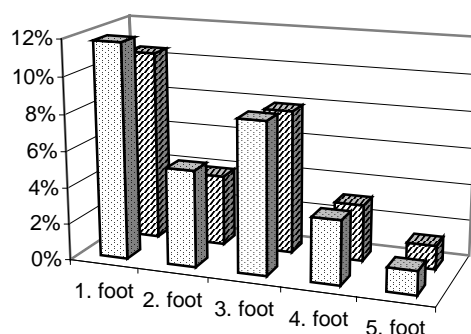
4.4. Rhythm

Villem Ridala's rhythmical statistics is somewhat different from Bergmann's data. The statistics is demonstrated in Tables 3–4 and Charts 3–4.

Table 8. The proportion of contracted verse feet in Villem Ridala's hexameters

	1 st foot	2 nd foot	3 rd foot	4 th foot	5 th foot
Maximum proportion of contractions	11.8%	5.3%	8.3%	3.5%	1.3%
Minimal proportion of contractions	10.5%	3.9%	7.9%	3.1%	1.3%

Figure 5. The proportion of contracted verse feet in Villem Ridala's hexameter



The proportion of contractions in the first and second feet is rather similar to Bergmann's data. The rhythm of the third foot, on the other hand, diverges from that of Bergmann: Ridala uses there over 10% less contractions than the earlier author. The fourth foot differs even more: the number of contractions is over 20% smaller. As a result, the total number of "spondees" per verse in Ridala's hexameters is considerably lower than in Bergmann. Similarly to other observed authors, the fifth foot corresponds to the structure of ancient hexameter, being predominantly dactylic.

As for the pattern of word-ends in "spondaic" feet, here also the picture is quite different from that of Bergmann's verse: the most regulated foot in Ridala's case is the first foot, where ca 80% of such feet are realized with two monosyllabic words (e.g. 'veed on', 'mis jääb', 'kild ehk', etc). Such tendencies are characteristic also of the second and the fifth feet, where the positioning of monosyllabic words results also in the word boundary inside a foot (ca in 60% of the cases). In the

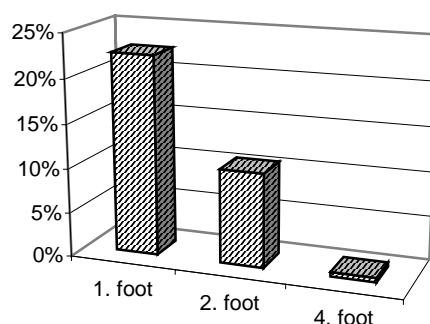
fourth foot (similarly to Bergmann’s verse) disyllabic words prevail: ‘maastik’, ‘lokkav’, ‘paljad’, etc.

Table 4 and Chart 4 present data of Villem Ridala’s pentameter.

Table 9. The proportion of contracted verse feet in Villem Ridala’s pentameter

1 st foot	2 nd foot	4 th foot ⁷
22.5%	10.6%	0.5%

Figure 6. The proportion of contracted verse feet in Villem Ridala's pentameter



The rhythmical structure of pentameters shows the same tendencies as that of the hexameter: the highest proportion of contractions occurs in the first foot. In nearly 60% of the cases a foot is made up of two monosyllabic words: ‘kõik teeb’, ‘kurt ja’, ‘kui meid’, etc.

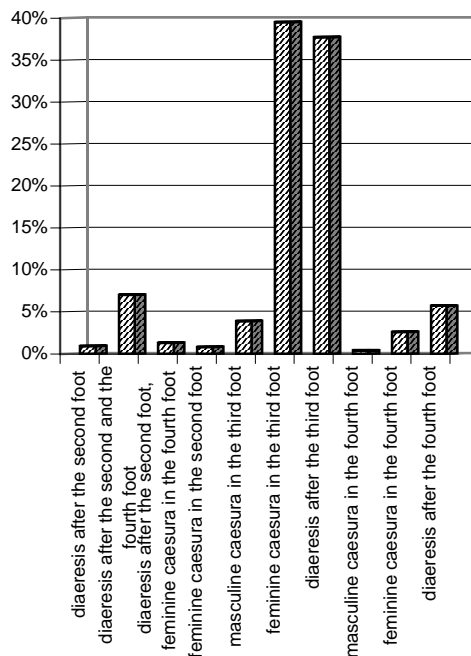
The following data show the location of caesura in Villem Ridala’s verse.

Table 10. Caesurae in Villem Ridala’s hexameters

diaeresis after the second foot	0.9%
diaeresis after the second and the fourth foot	7.0%
diaeresis after the second foot, feminine caesura in the fourth foot	1.3%
feminine caesura in the second foot	0.8%
masculine caesura in the third foot	3.9%
feminine caesura in the third foot	39.5%
diaeresis after the third foot	37.7%
masculine caesura in the fourth foot	0.4%
feminine caesura in the fourth foot	2.6%
diaeresis after the fourth foot	5.7%
total	100.0%

⁷ However, the only contraction occurring in this position is ambiguous: it could be a monophthongized long vowel.

Figure 7. Caesurae in Villem Ridala's hexameters



Here also the picture is rather different. Bergmann was more observant of the ancient rules, avoiding e.g. the diaeresis after the third foot whenever possible, whereas Ridala (similarly to Kuhlbars) yields to the natural impulse of the Estonian language which shows preference towards dactylic words and, as a consequence, the diaeresis which divides a verse line into two equal halves, is the second main pause in his verse line (the first being still the feminine caesura in the first foot which is in accordance with the ancient poetical practice). All other caesural types are marginal in Ridala's case.

While Bergmann often makes a conscious effort to avoid the concurrences of word-ends and metrical boundaries, in Ridala's verse such device is rather exceptional. The main technique is using a foreign word with an unstressed first syllable. See, e.g. in the hexameter ("Õhtu Reigis" – "An Evening in Reigi" 7):

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x X X x
 Pilv säras päikese hiilges kui kuldne, kristalline lemme

or in the pentameter ("Mustjala" 18):

X x x X x X X X x x X x x X
 Metsal idülline kool, sõbralik tutvus ja selts.

5. Other authors of accentual-syllabic hexameter of the period

Besides Jaan Bergmann, Friedrich Kuhlbars and Villem Ridala there are several other poets who have written hexametrical verses in this period. Such experiments have been found also in the poetry of Friedrich Robert Faehlmann, Lydia Koidula, Jakob Liiv, Juhan Liiv, Matthias Johann Eisen and Georg Eduard Luiga.

As far as we know, the earliest author who systematically wrote hexameters in elegiac distichs was Friedrich Robert Faehlmann, whose experiments were rather successful. He derived the metrical rules from the German verse practice and, hence, established the accentual-syllabic hexameter in Estonian, see e.g. “The Teaching of an Old Man from Järvamaa” (“Järvamaa vanamehe õpetused”) 1–4:

X x X x x X x x X(x) x X x x X x
 Miks on paha nii palju ja head nii vähe siin ilmas?
 X x X x x X X x x X x x X
 Silmad lahti sa tee, küll sa ju tunned siis, miks.
 X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
 Paha on tilluke ikka, kui ilmale sünnib. Ta ruttu
 X x x X x x X X x x X x x X
 kasvab, sest hooletus tal hoidjaks ja toitjaks ju on.

In general, he observes the rules of ancient hexameter, varying dactylic and “spondaic” (i.e. trochaic) feet, although not admitting contractions in the second part of the pentameter. But he ignores the Greek rule of caesurae and admits amply bisecting diaereses after the third foot: e.g. “Story of a pipe” (“Piibujutt”) 7–10:

Ära sa, vennike, naera, / lase mu piibuke rahul!
 Kõigile oma au. / Piibuke, sinule ka.
 Kõik maailm on mu ümber, / kui mu piibuke aurab,
 inimeste õnn / viirab ja mängib mu ees.

Note also the first two feet of the 10th verse, which are filled with the tetrasyllabic word ‘inimeste’ – in the second feet the strong position is realized with a secondary word stress.

Lydia Koidula, one of the leading poetesses of the period, wrote also some hexameters, composing them, like Faehlmann, in elegiac distichs. Verse technique and prosody of her hexameters are typical of her time, although she seems to be more aware of the structure of Greek elegiac distich than, for instance Friedrich Kuhlbars. Accordingly, she does not use contractions in the fifth foot of the hexameter or the second half of the pentameter. Caesurae occur mostly in the third foot after the first unstressed syllable (i.e. feminine caesurae), see e.g. “Comrade” (“Seltsimees”) 1:

Kätkis juba sull', sõber, / truu seltsimeheks ma pantud.

At the same time, there is no visible effort to avoid the coincidences between word-ends and metrical boundaries; occasionally, she manages to do so by using compound words, see e.g. “Comrade” 3:

X x X x x X x X x x X x x X x
Mullakarva mul kuub ja nägu mul kortsus on; ikka.

Yet another author who has written in elegiac distichs is Georg Eduard Luiga, see e.g. an excerpt from his poem “Resurrection” (“Ülestõusmine”) 1–8:

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Kivise kaane all hauas on hingamas tapetud Tõde.
X x x X x x X x x X x x X
Sulutud jäädvalt ta suu, igavest’ kinni ta keel.
X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Haua pääl ametlik pitsat, see kaljukaant kerkimast keelab,
X x x X x x X x x X x x X
Otsijaid peletab siit eemale vahtide salk.

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Päälinna kõrgetes kodades peetakse rõõmsasti pidu:
X x X x x X x x X x x X
Rahurikkujast maa jällegi vaba on nüüd!
X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Enam ta alamal rahval ei meesid mässule aja,
X x x X x x X x x X x x X
Rääkides õigusest neil’, sõideldes õelate tööd.

Luiga has contractions both in hexameters and in pentameters (in the latter, correctly – from the viewpoint of classical standards – only in the first half verse): Luiga’s contracted feet have a trochaic structure, as is usual during the period under discussion. Caesurae are almost always feminine caesurae in the third foot (except for the diaeresis in the fifth verse).

In Jakob Liiv’s collection “Lyric Songs” there are no examples of stichic hexameters, but among the dactylic pentameters which are quite common in his poetry, six-foot dactyls appear sometimes as well. For example in the poem “Impressions” which is written in the catalectic dactylic pentameter, the second verse goes as follows:

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Ära mu isamaal, langemas vaevaga ehitud kojad.

In the poem “To my leader” (“Oma juhile”) the tetrastichs are organized in the way that the first, six-foot dactyl is followed by three five-foot dactyls; the third verse of the third tetrastich has also six feet:

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Usu, mu rinnas on varjatud tuli ja Veesuv ja äike.

In the case of Jakob Liiv's verses we are, however, dealing with syllabic-accentual dactyls, where the number of syllables is fixed. Only occasionally can a dactyl be replaced with a trochee, cf in the dactylic pentameter in the poem "Impressions"⁸:

X x x X x x X (x) x X x x X x
 Võita või surra, – teist teed ju enam ei ole.

Juhan Liiv, Jakob Liiv's younger brother, has dactylic hexameters in several poems. One of these is the syllabic-accentual poem "Summer Wind", in which the first two verses and the fourth verse are catalectic dactylic hexameters, the third and the fifth verse are catalectic dactylic pentameters and the sixth verse is a hypercatalectic dactylic pentameter. The poem "Asking", starting with the fifth stanza, includes catalectic dactylic hexameters as well. Unlike the previous poem we are not dealing here with a syllabic-accentual, but with an accentual-syllabic verse – the number of syllables is not fixed and there are also trochaic replacements:

X x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
Soome sugud peaks surema Venemaa tugevus' pärast.

"The Poet" begins also with hexametrical verses. The first three lines are pure dactyls, but in the fourth verse also two contracted verse feet can be seen:

X x X x x X x x X x X x x X x
Kas veel varjugi jäänud ta sünnitustest ja nimest.

Juhan Liiv never paid much attention to form (cf also Tuglas 1958:384, 403) and his hexameters thus contain numerous violations of syllabical and accentual structure. It is hard to say whether for Liiv six-foot dactyls have any connotations with antiquity whatsoever (cf especially the poem "Asking" – "Küsimine" – which begins with a dactylic tetrameter and grows, as the poem evolves, into a dactylic heptameter), but it is remarkable that Liiv already at this period uses accentual-syllabic dactyl in his original poetry.

At the same time, in the aetiological poem "How Ilmatar⁹ weaved a rainbow" ("Kuidas Ilmatar Vikerkaart kudus") by Matthias Johann Eisen hexameter has clear relations to the genre as well as to the theme. It is a fantasy based on the material of Fenno-Ugric mythology, where the elements of folklore are interwoven with the ancient verse form. Although the quantity is not yet a conscious constituent of versification, the rhythmical structure is still perceptibly quantitative, cf 7–8:

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
 Kuldsele kirstule kõpsis, säält seitsmeta võitmata värvi,

⁸ Nevertheless, we should not reject a possibility of monophthongization in the third foot.

⁹ The daughter of Air.

X x x X x x X x x X x x X x x X x
 Kullased lõimed kõik võttis ja terasest telgile kandis.

In the 20th century, important innovations are developed: in addition to the number of syllables and word-accents, the practitioners of ancient metres start taking into account also the quantitative structure of words. First, the so-called “purely quantitative hexameter” evolves (represented by Jaan Lõo, Gustav Suits and Ervin Roos). Secondly, the principles of quantitative-syllabic versification are elaborated, and since the 1950s, the leading hexametrists (among others August Annist, Ain Kaalep, Ants Oras) have followed these rules in their work.

6. The early Estonian accentual-syllabic hexameter: discussion

6.1. Prosody

The analysed material provides evidence that the prosody of poetry is not necessarily determined by the prosody of natural language. The main prosodical deviations in the observed texts were:

- a) the monophthongization of diphthongs and sometimes long vowels;
- b) additional syllables;
- c) syncopes inside words;
- d) losses of final syllables.

These phenomena are very common at that time: in addition to the hexametrical material similar devices can be found also from the poetry written in other metres¹⁰. It is nevertheless important to emphasize that the prosodical shifts in the given material are rather superficial, providing the possibilities to vary the number of syllables: a) and b) add a syllable while c) and d) reduce the number of syllables. At the same time, licenses concerning consonant syllables which sometimes occur, e.g. in trochees, cf. Juhan Liiv “Become Formed” 5):

pikkmeele pitser peale

or, vice versa, the consontantalization of vowels, e.g. Gustav Suits “Young Rhymester” (“Noor värsisepp”) 12:

aimad lõhna. Heljotroop

were not found in the analysed material.

The basic prosodic qualities of language are retained in the given material: as a rule, word accents thus occur in strong positions (while in other metres the analysed authors sometimes allow accents also in weak positions, cf, e.g. Jaan Bergmann “In the Evening” (“Õhtul”) 1–4

¹⁰ Jaan Bergmann’s trochaic and iambic pentameters analysed in comparison (altogether 1000 verses) included 20 instances of monophthongization, 20 additional syllables, 65 syncopes and 50 losses of final syllables or vowels.

Kuu paistab kõrgest tähtistaevast
 maa pääle hõbekumaga,
 ta täidab saunad, täidab lossid,
 ühtlasi armsa valgega.
 or Friedrich Kuhlbars “Linda’s Mourning” (“Linda leinamine”) 9-12:
 Ei suutnud siiski sellega
 nad lese leina lõpeta.
 Ta nõrkes, närtsis nõmmele,
 Kalevi kalmu kaljule

where in the last iambic tetrameter the first position is filled with an accentual syllable, although metrically it demands an unaccented one).

In the 20th century, however, these most basic features are changed as well, as in the artificial quantitative hexameter by Jaan Lõo, Ervin Roos or Gustav Suits, where the new rules of quantity are created, while the accentual level is, to a smaller or greater extent, ignored. Thus, it is evident that a principle formulated by Ilse Lehiste (see e.g. Lehiste 2000:11, 20), according to which the prosodic structure of a language is crystallized in the prosody of the traditional poetry created in that language, does not apply to the Estonian hexametrical verse.

6.2. Metre

The analysis of metre proceeds from the principles of generative metrics (cf Halle, Lotman etc). In accordance with this the deep structure of hexameter could be presented with the following scheme:

&&AB&AB&AB&AB&AB&AB&&¹¹

The formulation of metrical correspondence rules proceeds from the statistical analysis of surface structures. In the present material three different metrical types can be distinguished.

1) The first type is characteristic of Jaan Bergmann’s hexameter, but also of the larger part of Friedrich Kuhlbars’s hexameters.

The following accentual-syllabic rules apply:

a) To the position A corresponds one syllable with a primary stress or one syllable with a secondary stress.

A → \acute{x} ,

A → \grave{x}

b) To the position B corresponds one unstressed syllable or a sequence of two unstressed syllables. In the latter case, the first or the second syllable of the sequence can also carry a secondary stress.

B → x

B → $\grave{x}x$

B → $\acute{x}x$

B → $\grave{x}x$

¹¹ A and B mark different positions, & and && are metrical delimiters.

The position B can also be filled with a monosyllabic word with a primary or secondary stress:

B → #x#

B → #x̣#

2) The second type is a somewhat poorer variation of the first. It is divergent from the ancient principles, but more adequate for the prosody of the Estonian language: such hexameter is characteristic of Villem Ridala¹².

The accentual-syllabic rules are mainly the same, but some additional principles apply.

As a rule, word boundaries occur in verse foot boundaries:

A → #x̣

A → #x̣

B → x#

B → xx#

An important difference from the first type lies in the pattern of word-ends at the end of verse. While in Bergmann's hexameter enjambement is a common device, e.g.:

Lauas ta istus nüüd sääl ja rõõmustas roast. Kõik teised
jumalad kogusid kokku siis Zeusi, olümplase kotta (1, 26–27)

in Ridala's hexameters, as a rule, verse-ends coincide with syntagmatic boundaries:

B₆ → x##

3) The third type is the poorest and occurs only in some texts by Friedrich Kuhlbars. In comparison with the first two we are dealing with a fundamentally different structure, which has been reduced to the syllabic-accentual catalectic dactyls.

Consequently, syllabic-accentual correspondence rules apply.

a) To the position A corresponds a syllable with a primary stress:

A → #x̣

b) To the position B corresponds a sequence of unstressed syllables:

B → xx#

Verse boundaries are marked with syntagmatic word-ends:

B₆ → x##

6.3. Rhythm

Statistical data allow us to distinguish several different types also in the rhythmical structure of the accentual-syllabic hexameter. The interpretation of these data proceeds from Mikhail Gasparov's approach, who introduced the term 'secondary rhythm' for the rhythmical regularities of the structure of verse feet (Gasparov 1975).

¹² It has to be noted that in Ridala's later works quantitative hexameter is starting to evolve, where another set of rules fixing the arrangement of durations is applied.

The rhythmical type which manifests itself mainly in Jaan Bergmann's verse is represented in the following scheme:

0 / 0 / 1 / 1 / 0 / 1

where 0 marks a dactylic foot, 1 marks a contracted foot. It is characteristic of this type that the last feet of the structure form rhythmically rather strong contrasts. It can thus be said that the secondary rhythmic of this type is determined by the metrical constant in the sixth foot, which is in strong contrast with the fifth foot (the latter is preferably dactylic also in the ancient hexameter due to the same contrastive mechanism). The third and the fourth foot, in their turn, are in opposition with the fifth foot, containing statistically more spondees (although the contrast is not that strong any more); the first and the second foot, on the other hand, are predominantly dactylic.

The rhythmical type of Kuhlbars' hexameter is quite similar to that of Bergmann:

1 / 0 / 1 / 1 / 0 / 1

However, since the percentage of contractions is lower, the rhythmical oppositions are weaker (the contrast is only between the fifth and the sixth foot). The main difference lies in the secondary rhythmic of the beginning of hexameter: in Bergmann's verse the contrast is between the first and the second trimeter of the verse, whereas in Kuhlbars' verse the alternation continues: the occurrences of contractions are in the first foot higher again.

The rhythmic of Villem Ridala's hexameter is also determined by the dissimilative principle, but while the rhythm of other authors is characterized by the regressive alternation (the proportion of contractions decreases towards the beginning of verse), Ridala's rhythmic is more complex, consisting of the progressive alternation towards the beginning of verse: the highest proportion of contractions is in the sixth foot (being entirely "spondaic"). The sixth foot is, in turn, in contrast with the mainly dactylic fifth foot. The proportion of contractions is slightly higher in the fourth foot, even more higher in the third, then again lower in the second and higher in the first foot. The ideal structure is demonstrated in the following scheme:

1 / 0 / 1 / 0 / 0 / 1

The fourth type is the unvaried dactylic form practised by Friedrich Kuhlbars:

0 / 0 / 0 / 0 / 0 / 1

The absence of syllabic variations is determined already by metrical correspondence rules (see 6.2). There are no variations also on the accentual level, since according to the rules each strong position is filled with a primary stress.

Consequently, it could be said that the Estonian accentual-syllabic hexameter is preferably dactylic and thus, the general impression is rather different from the rhythmic of ancient hexameter: while in the case of the latter the secondary rhythm results from the dissimilative principle throughout the whole verse, then in Estonian hexameter the dissimilation is present only in the verse end (we have to keep in mind that during the described period the Estonian hexametrical tradition is very young; the rhythmical universal according to which the

evolution of verse begins from the *clausula* and grows towards the beginning of verse has to be considered as well). The contractions are events operating to create a rhythmical effect rather than to form consistent oppositions as in Greek hexameter.

7. Summary

All in all, it can be said that although the authors of the Estonian accentual-syllabic hexameter seem to have been generally acquainted with the structure of ancient hexameter, they tended to yield to the natural rhythmic impulse of the Estonian language. It becomes most obvious when we analyse the relationship between word-ends and metrical boundaries: the main caesura in the works of most authors is the bisecting diaeresis after the third foot, despite the fact that such rhythmical pattern was avoided in the ancient hexameter. Word-ends coincide freely with metrical boundaries in other parts of verse as well (while in the ancient hexameter they tended to occur inside verse feet); the only author who is in this respect closer to the classical model is Jaan Bergmann. Another important feature of the Estonian accentual-syllabic hexameter derives from the prosody of the natural language as well – contractions are, as a rule, trochees instead of spondees. The same qualities characterise also the pentameter, where several authors have allowed more liberties than was accepted in the ancient pentameter: thus, e.g. Friedrich Kuhlbars allows contractions also in the second half of the pentameter, while Villem Ridala employs regular rhymes between the half verses. Finally, the most important difference from the ancient hexameter is the proportion of contractions: in the earlier Estonian hexameter, contractions are rather occasional. Such feature affects mainly the rhythmical structure of hexameter, contributing to the special rhythmical effect of contracted verse feet.

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